

**Para Todos
Facilitator Guide
DVD 1—Chapter 1
Communication**

Dear Facilitators:

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about family communication and learning to listen to and better understand our children.

Chapter Goals:

1. To provide information on communicating effectively with our children.
2. To encourage parents to listen and talk to our children more effectively.
3. To encourage parents to talk more frequently with our children.

Suggestions for Guest Speakers:

To enrich the session, the facilitator could invite the following experts in communication:

- Parents who learned to communicate effectively with their children.
- School counselors
- Therapists
- Spiritual/religious community members
- Community leaders.

VIDEO, PART I

Main Concepts:

The following concepts are presented in the first section:

1. Daily pressures and parental responsibilities often prevent parents from talking to their children every day.
2. Open and honest communication is achieved when we make an effort to listen attentively to our children.
3. It is very important to talk to our children from an early age about the dangers of smoking, drinking, and using illicit drugs.
4. It is very important to establish good communication between parents and children.

Participants should understand the following points:

- It is not easy to communicate with children; it takes time and patience. To communicate well, parents must understand and respect children's feelings.
- It is important to talk with children and listen attentively. Spend at least 15 minutes a day talking. If you cannot, talk with them as much as you can.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #1

During this pause, ask participants the following questions:

- What is the best time to talk with our children?
- What are some missed opportunities during which we could talk with our children?
- What positive experiences have we had while talking with our children?

Participant's responses could include the following points:

- The best time to talk to our children is when they start a conversation.
- It is always a good time to talk with our children—when they come home from school, while they are doing their homework, while they are helping with household chores, when they are in the car with us, when we go for a walk together.

VIDEO, PART II

Main Concepts:

The following concepts are presented in the second section:

1. Establishing a sincere dialog and trusting one another is important.
2. Talking to our kids without imposing verbal or physical barriers and never making fun of their feelings are important.

Dramatization: Mi Barrio

In the first part of this dramatization, the father does not listen to or sympathize with his daughter's problems. Then, in the next scene he demonstrates a more effective way to communicate with her.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #2

During this pause, ask participants to respond to the following questions:

- What verbal and non-verbal communication barriers did we see in the dramatization?
- What are some ways to overcome these barriers?

Participants should understand the following points:

- Parents need to listen attentively to what our children are saying.
- We need to show an interest in our children's problems.
- While talking with our children, we should maintain an emotional connection and pay attention to our children's facial expressions and body language.

VIDEO, PART III—CONCLUSION

Main Concepts:

The main concept presented in the third section is:

Good communication is the key to resolving family issues.

Optional Activities:

The facilitator may want to use the following group activities that are not included in the video. If you would like to tell us how the activity worked with your group or suggest ideas for additional activities, please contact us at webmaster@hablemos.samhsa.gov.

ACTIVITY #1 (a): Using Body Language–Negative Example

Goal: To learn how to use body language to show our children we are really listening.

- **Choose** two volunteers.
- **Assign** each volunteer a role: one plays the child and one plays the parent.
- **Give** each volunteer a piece of paper explaining their role.
- **Ask** them to act out their roles.

Child's role

You arrive home from school worried. You go up to your mother while she is cooking. You try to tell your mom that you had a fight at school. You tell her that a boy is always hitting you and you do not want to go out during recess because you are afraid you will see him, and worst of all, some of the girls are making fun of you.

Parent's role/negative example

You are cooking and your child comes back from school looking worried. The child starts telling you about his/her day.

While the child speaks, look as though you are **not** listening:

- Continue cooking.
- Act impatient.
- Cross your arms.
- Do not look at him while you talk.
- Do not nod your head.
- Do not lean toward your child.

- Once the role play is over, ask the group to:
 - **Discuss** whether the parent was listening.
 - **Describe** the actions that made the group think the parent was not listening.
 - **Share** whether they have ever acted this way.

ACTIVITY #1 (b): Using Body Language–Positive Example

Goal: To learn how to use body language to show our children we are really listening.

- **Choose** two volunteers.
- **Assign** each volunteer a role: one plays the child and one plays the parent.
- **Give** each volunteer a piece of paper explaining their role.
- **Ask** them to act out their roles.

Child's role

You arrive home from school worried. You go up to your mother while she is cooking. You try to tell your mom you had a fight at school. You tell her that a boy is always hitting you and you do not want to go out during recess because you are afraid you will see him, and worst of all, some of the girls are making fun of you.

Parent's role/positive example

You are cooking and your child comes back from school looking worried. The child starts telling you about his/her day.

While the child speaks, look as though you are listening:

- Do not act impatient.
- Stop cooking.
- Sit down so that you are at eye level with your child.
- Stay calm (do not cross your arms or legs).
- Maintain eye contact.
- Nod your head.
- Lean towards your child.
- Get close to your child and show affection (e.g., hug your child, put your hand on his/her shoulder, hold his/her hand, etc.).

- Once the role play is over, ask the group to:
 - **Discuss** whether the parent was listening.

- **Describe** the actions that made the group think the parent was not listening.
- **Share** whether they have ever acted this way.

ACTIVITY #2: Improving Communication With Our Children

Goal: To reinforce communication skills that help build strong relationships between parents and children.

1. Using open-ended questions

When we use open-ended questions we receive more extensive answers. These answers tell us about our children's general circumstances, moods, perceptions, and honest opinions. By contrast, closed questions tend to tell us very little (e.g., YES or NO responses).

2. Being specific and direct

Sometimes we make requests of our children and are not clear or direct. For example, we ask them to "straighten up your room" instead of saying, "make your bed, pick up your clothes, put the dirty clothes in the laundry basket, and take out the trash."

3. Expressing our feelings

By using phrases such as "I feel," "I think," and "I want," our children do not feel they have to be on guard and they're more likely to listen to us because we do not sound like we are scolding them. When we use "YOU" it sounds like a threat.

- **Divide** the group into three subgroups. Ask the first group to complete the following exercises on open-ended questions (Exercise A). Ask the second group to complete the exercises on clear and direct communication (Exercise B). The third group should complete the exercises on using "I" (Exercise C).
- **Ask** each subgroup to present their responses to the entire group.

Exercise A
Asking Open-Ended Questions

Instructions:

The group should discuss and write down ways to change these closed questions into open-ended ones. Then, present the results to the entire group.

Change the following closed questions into open-ended questions:	
Closed	Open-Ended
Example of a closed question: 1. How was school?	Example of an open-ended question: 1. What did you do in school today?
2. Did you play during recess?	2.
3. Do you have homework?	3.
4. Are you feeling okay?	4.
5. Do you like your classmates?	5.
6. Did you have a test today?	6.

Exercise A—Answers for the Facilitator
Asking Open-Ended Questions

Note to facilitator—Here are some examples of open-ended questions:

1. What did you do in school today?
2. What did you do during recess?
3. What homework do you have?
4. Why do you look so sad?
5. What do you think of your classmates?
6. What questions were on the test?

Exercise B
Being Specific

Instructions:

The group should discuss and write down ways to change the following general statements into specific comments. Then, present the results to the entire group.

Change the following general statements into specific comments:	
General	Specific
Example of a general comment: 1. Please help me clean the kitchen.	Example of a specific comment: 1. Please help me clear the table, put the dishes in the dishwasher, shake out the tablecloth, and put the leftovers in the refrigerator.
2. Be good at Juana's party.	2.
3. Do not come home late tonight.	3.
4. Let me know when you get to your friend's house.	4.
5. If you get home late, you will be grounded.	5.
6. After you finish your homework, you can watch TV.	6.

Exercise B—Answers for the Facilitator
Asking Specific Questions

Note to facilitator—The following are some suggested specific comments:

1. Please help me clear the table, put the dishes in the dishwasher, shake out the tablecloth, and put the leftovers in the refrigerator.
2. I do not want you to drink or smoke at Juana's party. If you feel uncomfortable when someone offers you a drink or a cigarette, call me and I will pick you up.
3. You need to be home by 8 p.m.
4. When you go to a friend's house, I need to know his/her name and the names of other people who will be there. Give me the address and phone number where you will be, as well as the parents' names.
5. I will not let you watch TV or talk on the phone.
6. You can watch one TV show after you finish your homework and walk the dog.

Exercise C
Using “I” Instead of “You”

Change “you” to “I” in the following sentences:	
“You” Sentences	“I” Sentences
Example of a “You” sentence: 1. You always argue with me rather than doing what you’re told.	Example of an “I” sentence: 1. I would feel much better if you obeyed me more and argued less.
2. You do not help out with household chores.	2.
3. You are always wasting time.	3.
4. You do not show your feelings.	4.
5. You do not pay attention to what I say.	5.
6. You are such a scatterbrain.	6.

Exercise C—Answers for the Facilitator
Using “I” Instead of “You”

Note to facilitator—The following are some suggested “I” sentences:

1. I would feel much better if you obeyed me more and argued less.
2. I would like you to help me out with household chores more often.
3. I am worried that you are wasting your time.
4. I wish you were more open with me.
5. I sometimes think that you do not pay attention to what I am saying.
6. I have noticed that you look distracted. How can I help?